

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A memory cell matrix with a plurality of associative memory cells and match lines are respectively divided into two in the direction of the match line. A first memory cell matrix is provided with a match line 5 pre-charge circuit that pre-charges the match line in the first memory cell matrix, and a match line sense amplifier that detects the potential of the match line. A second memory cell matrix is provided with a match line pre-charge circuit that pre-charges the match line in the second memory cell matrix, a match line sense amplifier that detects the 10 potential of the match line in the second memory cell matrix, and a second match line control circuit. The second match line control circuit operates the match line pre-charge circuit in the second memory cell matrix, to pre-charge the match line, only when the data comparison result in the first memory cell matrix indicates agreement.